

The Sun.

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Peace First, and Then the Flag Stars.

A Presidential message ten or eleven columns long, and adding little that is essential to the declaration of Administrative policy contained in Mr. McKINLEY's brief speech at Ocean Grove.

"Peace first, then, with charity to all, establish a government of law and order, protecting life and property, and occupation for the well-being of the people; a government in which they shall participate under the Stars and Stripes."

I. At any cost and at any sacrifice put down the armed insurrection led by AGUI-
 WALDO against the flag and the authority of the United States.

II. The best of government for the Philippines—government under the flag of the United States. The flag stays.

That is all, but it is enough. There can be no doubt now in any mind as to the definite character of the President's policy in the Philippines.

In announcing the second number of the programme above, Mr. McKINLEY remarked that he was saying more than he had intended to say.

But he went no farther than the country he is to follow w him.

Will the Court-Martial Judgment End the Dreyfus Affair?

According to a despatch from Paris, President LOUVER has declared that the impartiality of the court-martial now sitting at Rennes is undisputed, and that the judgment rendered by that tribunal will be accepted by all Frenchmen as a final settlement of the Dreyfus case. Are these assertions well founded?

If the court-martial shall pronounce Dreyfus innocent, and if, in consequence of the decision, he shall be reinstated in his army rank, it is certain that the judgment will be regarded as a righteous one by the friends of the accused and by disinterested onlookers in foreign countries who are familiar with the details of the affair. It is equally certain that such a judgment will be angrily denounced by the partisans of the General Staff who include almost every army officer, and who are believed to comprehend, also, a majority of Frenchmen. So vehement would be the protest against a reinstatement of DREYFUS in the rank of which he has been deprived, that even General DE GALIFFE would shrink, it is said, from such a step, and would adopt a compromise by placing the wronged officer on the retired list.

President LOUVER, therefore, is not justified in asserting that the judgment of the second court-martial will be accepted by all Frenchmen, provided it is favorable to the accused.

It is no less plain that the judgment of the second court-martial will not be accepted by the friends of DREYFUS, or by impartial onlookers who have followed the proceedings of the tribunal, should the result of the trial be a conviction of the accused.

In the mass of hearsay testimony and expressions of personal opinion there cannot be discovered enough evidence of the kind that would be considered legal in England or here to justify even an indictment by a Grand Jury.

If, under the circumstances, the accused is again condemned, his friends will, unquestionably, try to obtain a revision of the second sentence. On what plea could they base their application? Had the counsel for DREYFUS protested against the scope given to the investigation by the military tribunal, they might perhaps have demanded the annulment of the sentence on the ground that the military judges were prejudiced by the decision of the Court of Cassation from undertaking the inquiry whether DREYFUS was the author of the *bordereau*, or whether he made a confession of guilt to Capt. LEBRUN-RENAUD. It is not quite certain that the court-martial was thus precluded, for it has been alleged that, according to M. MAZEAU, First President of the Court of Cassation, by whom the judgment in the revision case was signed, the two specific inquiries named might be entered upon anew by the second court-martial, provided new evidence bearing upon the decision be produced.

Whether or no the counsel for DREYFUS would have a right to demand, on the ground mentioned, the annulment of a second adverse sentence seems to be now a purely academic question, if, as THE SUN's correspondent at Rennes asserts, they voluntarily renounced the right in advance of the trial, and declared that they would welcome the fullest investigation of the conduct of the accused.

In any event, however, there may be one ground upon which the counsel for DREYFUS can demand that a second adverse sentence by court-martial shall be revised by the Court of Cassation. We refer, of course, to the ground on which the first sentence was annulled, namely, the discovery of new facts or documents tending to establish the innocence of the accused, but unknown to the military tribunal by which sentence was passed. Such facts and documents are believed to be in the possession of the German and Italian Governments, and, indisposed as Kaiser WILLIAM seems just now to offend the military party in France, he will scarcely be able to resist the appeals that the civilized world is making for the release of a man from a second unjust conviction. According to a telegram from Rome, the Italian Government has expressed a willingness to furnish the defenders of DREYFUS with exculpatory evidence at the present trial, but has been held back by Kaiser WILLIAM, who considers that the public announcement made by the German Government, that it never had any relations, direct or indirect, with the accused officer ought to suffice.

As to the other statement made by President LOUVER that the impartiality of the Rennes court-martial is undisputed, it certainly is not confirmed by the reports of the foreign correspondents who are watching the trial. On the contrary, the exhibition of prejudice against the accused

on the part of the tribunal is frequent and flagrant. Witnesses for DREYFUS are cut short, while to witnesses against him is allowed all the time desired. The presiding Judge has refused to permit the alleged physical disability of DU PATTY DE CLAM to be verified by physicians known to the Court, and has accepted a certificate of illness from unknown physicians. He refused to adjourn the court for an hour when an attempt was made to assassinate the principal counsel for the accused, and only with extreme reluctance has he since allowed Maître LAHORI to cross-examine witnesses who were called during his enforced absence from the court room.

Indeed, the attitude of the Court toward DREYFUS is so grossly unfair that some superstitious observers have believed they could discern in it the mask of a secret intention to acquit the accused. This wire-drawn hypothesis attributes to the commonplace and stolid-looking officers who compose the court, a keenness of vision and greater power of sustained dissimulation than they, apparently, possess.

President LOUVER is much too optimistic if he really believes that the judgment rendered by the second court-martial will be accepted by all Frenchmen as a final settlement of the Dreyfus case. Whatever that judgment may be, it is certain to provoke violent protest in one quarter or another.

An Encouraging Demand.

We do not complain of any Democrat who recognizes that the continuance of our credit and prosperity depends on the preservation of the gold standard, for demanding that the Republican party shall justify its professions by its works in preserving the standard and declaring plainly and positively for it. We rather rejoice when such a demand is made, and the more emphatically it is expressed the better we like it, because, coming from a Democrat, it indicates that he must make the same demand of his own party as a condition of his support.

The Republican National Convention will meet next June, probably, and a few weeks thereafter the National Convention of the Democrats will assemble. Of course, it will not be possible until their occurrence, to determine exactly the attitude of either toward the question of the position which the gold standard will be compelled to take.

It affords reason for renewed confidence that we shall be preserved from the perils of silver domination when, by demanding that the Republican party shall declare positively for gold, the gold Democrats are making it so obvious that they will refuse to support their own party unless subsequently it makes a like declaration.

In serving notice on the Republicans that they can expect no help from them unless they come out for gold plumply and unmistakably, they are serving it on the Democrats also.

Paul Drouot.

Since BOULANGER hurried over the border into Belgium, no more curious or sinister character has crossed the French stage than PAUL DROUOT. At present he is in prison on a charge of treason to the Republic. He has been there before on the same indictment and he will probably be there again before his stormy career is closed. Each time he has been acquitted not for lack of sufficient evidence, but because the average French jury has an instinctive partiality for those melodramatic revolutionists of whom DROUOT is the type. The man whom the Parisian shopkeepers refused to condemn for seizing Gen. ROGEE's horse on the day of M. LOUBET's election and urging the General in frantic rhetoric to "march on the Elysée," has not much to fear from French justice.

The most Anglo-Saxons of DROUOT seem shallow and insignificant enough, and the Government somewhat at fault in running the risk of making a martyr of so fantastic a personage. But that is not the French view at all. Of all people they are the first to be gulled by some theatrical mediocrity and the last to be undeceived. Foreigners saw through BOULANGER and wrote him down as the mountebank he finally turned out to be, while *le brave Général* was everywhere being acclaimed in the streets of Paris. It is so to some extent with DROUOT. Whether or no he is really the adventurer, the charlatan, the crafty and ambitious monomaniac that he appears to English and American onlookers, in Paris he is a power. On no other man do the influences that aim at the overthrow of the Republic rely for leadership and inspiration so much as on PAUL DROUOT. Here and in England he would be laughed at and let good humoredly alone. But in France he is a force of very significant magnitude, much more so than most foreigners, disguised by his humiliations against DREYFUS, are willing to admit. One of the shrewdest judges of French politics has named him as the only real and dangerous pretender to the den of pretence of France.

There is a good deal in DROUOT's career and personality to explain his influence. He has as a genuine possession the qualities that attract the crowd everywhere, but with especial potency in France. During the Franco-Prussian war he joined one of the dashing Zouave regiments, was captured and imprisoned by the Germans, escaped by a stratagem that would not have disgraced D'ARTAGNAN, and made his way back to France by many disguises to offer his services to the Défense Nationale. Thereafter he took part in over twenty battles, winning as he went along one of the highest reputations of the war by his almost reckless courage. Possessed of his own mind, he was just as well, both for himself and his country, had he remained in the army to complete the career thus begun.

In the first few years of peace DROUOT added to his fame by the composition of some of the most vivid and stirring war songs that French literature possesses. Drifting into politics, by way of law letters, he made in *revanche* the text for his impetuous and engaging eloquence, preaching it in season and out for over twenty years with great success. He has kept him one of the idols of young France. Now he is in the front again, attacking the present régime with inexhaustible ingenuity and an effect which grows from day to day. Immediately around him are a dozen or so like COPPÉE, BARRÈS and JULES LEMAITRE—without whom no French agitation is complete. They are the neuro-trappings of his following. By sheer energy and vehemence he has made himself the rallying point for the anti-revolutionists who gathered round ESTERHÁZY and the General Staff and then sought by founding the *Le Figaro* Ligue to upset the State in the interests of a Pretender.

All those—and in France they are not few—who have a grudge against the Republic, the anti-Dreyfusards, anti-Semites, the Bonapartists, the Legitimists, and many of the leading generals who hanker after the old régime, have acknowledged DROUOT to be for the moment the champion of their cause. Over the multitude his romantic career, the fire of his personality and eloquence and the fact that he does stand for something tangible, have an influence which might at any time be turned into dangerous channels.

DROUOT himself disclaims any idea of overthrowing the Republic and protests with apparent honesty against the use made of his name and opinions by the Monarchists. In this he is probably sincere. There is no evidence to connect him with the Duke of OREANES, with Prince LOUIS or with Prince VICTOR and little enough reason for supposing he is working for any one but PAUL DROUOT. The Monarchists have fallen in behind him because as matters now are there is no one else around whom they can make even a show of rallying. A man who proclaims more loudly and ably than any one else a discontent which is felt by all must always attract a great many followers with whose private aims he is out of sympathy; and this seemingly is what has happened to DROUOT. He is anti-Dreyfusard enough to please even Gen. MERCIER, an anti-Semite to the point of satisfying even M. MAX RÉGIS; but the probabilities of the case are all against the notion of his being in the service of one of the Pretenders.

What DROUOT wants and what one Frenchman out of every three would agree to, is not the establishment of a dynasty, but the restoration of the Republic. He has the President elected not by the Chambers, but as is practically the case with us, by a direct vote of the people; and there is a good deal to be said in favor of the change. There is at present no governing body or personage in France for whom Frenchmen have anything but a most meagre respect. The Deputies do not command it because, as M. DEMOLINS showed recently, they do not represent France, or at least not the desirable elements in France. The Ministries do not command it because they never live long enough to impress themselves on the people. The President does not command it, because he is little more than the chairman of a committee. It is open to very little doubt that were the President to be chosen directly by the people, his influence and dignity would be immensely increased. No army officer, even in France, would dare to flout the representative of the people's will, and all classes would feel it their interest to protect the elected chief magistrate from insult.

No doubt there is a personal side to M. DROUOT's agitation. With the Presidential office thrown open to popular vote, there would be a wide enough scope even for his ambition. Nor would the step from the Presidency to a Dictatorship be too long for a man of DROUOT's confidence. That, of course, is the great argument against taking the choice of the President away from the Chambers. LOUIS NAPOLEON received the popular election to the Presidency, but it was not long before he called himself Emperor.

For the way in which PAUL DROUOT has exploited the Dreyfus case to damage the Republic and clear the path for his own projects there can be nothing but condemnation. It has been done with consummate astuteness, but justice and legality are not to be prostituted thus. Apart from this, there is much in his agitation against the present method of electing the President that commands attention and may before long become one of the great questions of France.

Our Sub-Arid Belt.

The debatable land between our arid and humid regions has a mean width of about 200 miles and includes the central parts of North and South Dakota, and the western parts of Nebraska and Kansas. The soil is a rich, brown loam, and few parts of the country would be more productive if the region had a few more inches of rain every year. It was to these lands in Kansas and Nebraska that many thousands of farmers were lured, some twelve or fifteen years ago, by two seasons of more than average rainfall resulting in excellent crops. They lingered in this thirteenth region for several years till they had learned the bitter lesson that dryness was its normal state and that they must go elsewhere to make a living. The beggars of drought sufferers from the two States numbered over 200,000 persons.

It seemed as though this sub-arid region might then revert to its former condition when it was used only for stock ranges. But those who remained there or have since settled in the country have been working for years to see if they cannot save a considerable part of the land for agriculture. It is to their advantage that a good deal of less water is required for irrigation than in the more arid regions to the west. The development of irrigation in the sub-arid belt has been particularly active in the past few years, and the whole country is interested in the efforts now making to bring the central counties of the Dakotas and Nebraska and Kansas available for farmers instead of relapsing wholly into grazing lands for range cattle.

In North and South Dakota the growth of irrigation has depended mainly upon the boring of artesian wells. For some years our Geological Survey has been studying the water-bearing formation known as the Dakota sandstones, which extends under a large part of the two States and has already yielded much water to the Dakotas through the water derived from it. It is a vast artesian basin, and most geologists say it is replenished by the rivers that flow over the formation and the rainfall on the mountains and foothills that limit the basin to the west. Prof. WHITNEY, however, writing in 1894, thought it probable that these artesian waters were stored at a former period of time, when the precipitation was greater than at present. However this may be, and whether or not the supply is liable to complete exhaustion, there is no doubt of its immense present utility. If the common view as to the source of the waters is correct, there is no doubt that, properly husbanded, these artesian supplies will be a perpetual, life-giving resource throughout a large part of the arid or the northern half of our sub-arid belt.

These wells, now numbering 1,200 to 1,500, as nearly as can be estimated from the latest reports, afford the water supply for many towns, and for a great number of farms. Many townships have incurred debt to sink the wells, and farmers have combined for the same purpose and shared the water product. The depth of the wells varies, at Yankton the water-bearing formation being struck at 600 feet below the

surface, while at other places the wells are 1,000 to 1,200 feet deep, and at Jamestown, N. D., the water supply comes from a depth of 1,500 feet. The extent of the formation is not yet clearly defined, at least in the latest reports of the Geological Survey, but there is some reason to believe that it stretches into Manitoba and Nebraska. The largest number of wells has been dug in the southern counties of South Dakota, and the most favorable results of irrigation are obtained. Irrigated lands have yielded thirty-four bushels of wheat to the acre, corn forty-eight, oats seventy-three and potatoes 210, while on adjacent unwatered lands the wheat yield was seven bushels, corn eight and oats twenty-two. This is doubtless an extreme case, but everywhere very profitable results have come from irrigation. A well costing \$3,000 in watering a section of 640 acres will pay for itself.

There are some artesian wells in Nebraska and Kansas, but the possibilities of water-winning by this method have not yet been thoroughly investigated. In the sub-arid belt of both States the farmers are now occupying the lands near the rivers and are irrigating all the acreage for which they have water. It is only four years since Nebraska organized her first irrigation board, and hardly any of the farms have been artesianly watered more than five years, but several millions of acres thus far have been reclaimed, and the success has been so large that the Legislature organized an irrigation board last winter with practical and well-equipped men to run it and an adequate appropriation.

It remains to be seen how far the sub-arid belt may be made tenable for a farming population by irrigation. It is evident that the water supply from the rivers is available only for a small part of the land, probably not more than an eighth of it. But as Nebraska and Kansas are showing a combination of farming and grazing is mutually advantageous and may be made to turn most of the land to good account. It is probable also that, even if the artesian waters of the Dakotas are perennially replenished, the drafts upon them may easily become so large and very likely they will not serve to water more than an eighth of the land. It is fortunate that owing to the clay subsoil in these States the moisture is so well retained near the surface that thorough irrigation is required only once in two years to raise fine crops; and if the farmers can water only an eighth of their lands they may advantageously utilize the remainder in stock grazing and their tilled lands will supply the grain needed to fatten their cattle and sheep for market.

Thus a combination of farming and grazing seems to offer an inviting prospect for the future of the sub-arid belt. This will be a splendid result well worth working for. If only an eighth of this region can be turned into a belt of farm lands the tilled area will be far larger than Iowa, one of our richest agricultural States. The direct addition it will make to the national wealth will be felt throughout the land, to say nothing of the impetus it will impart to the grazing interests that will occupy the remainder of the region.

The Stability of the Bicycle Trade.

The reports of Consuls abroad and observers at home indicate that the industry of cycle making in this country is now on a firm basis. If further proof were needed, it would only be necessary to consider the small number of failures in the trade during the present year. And if any speculation exists as to how the immense number and variety of new machines are disposed of, a little inquiry among riders will dispel all uncertainty. Two and three years ago the announcement that a bicycle company had gone out of business was received with very little surprise. The failures were so numerous that the public had expected their continuance as a matter of course. When they became fewer, people wanted to know what had caused the change.

Perhaps the best explanation of the present stability of the trade is to be found in the statement made recently by a dealer to the effect that, in the fierce competition of the past few years, manufacturers whose products stood the test of everyday usage demonstrated their title to success over that of other manufacturers of more or less doubtful skill and honesty. In other words, the finished output of the different makers did more to establish a reputation for first-class workmanship and fair dealing than all the boasts and promises that it was possible to circulate. The increased mechanical knowledge of riders and their familiarity with things cyclical were too great to admit of their being misled by false representations. They came to know a good wheel when they saw it, and they also knew a poor one when its name was pronounced.

In attempting to discover the real cause of the failure of numerous cycle concerns, much importance was attached to the fact that the new companies were without a reputation and, consequently, were severely handicapped. But, in reality, the lack of an established name among wheelmen has less to do with the companies' property than adversity that some may imagine. In the last five years riders have been influenced in making their choice of wheels quite as much by the machine's appearance as by the tag bearing the name of the maker. This is proved by the circumstance that very many enthusiastic wheelmen haven't the faintest idea as to the location or prominence of the manufacturing plants in which their wheels were constructed.

Some may say that it is a little too early in the season to speak with much certainty regarding the success of the bicycle industry in 1899, and that in September the aspect of the trade may be completely transformed. Certainly there is ample time for a great change in the conditions between now and next January, but it will be remembered in connection with the failures of most of the wheelmakers in the past that their collapse was predicted months before it occurred, and that their success would have called forth much more surprise than was caused by the announcement of their insolvency.

While it will not be strange if the fall months mark the retirement of a few competing manufacturers, there are strong indications that the so-called wheelings and whifflings in the wheel-making business have become scarce.

The philosopher of the *St. Paul Globe* sees a glorious vision of hope for the Democracy. Admiral Dewey is coming home. He is the most popular man of the Western Hemisphere. If the Democracy can only catch him and make him its own magnet all will be well; "Let all the little politicians of the States of this Union line up this morning before the mirror of self-esteem; let them accord themselves the full meed of merit to which they think themselves entitled, and let them reach the conclusion, as they have reached it, that the year of 1900 is for shoulders far broader than theirs."

"The Democratic party has but to make this man

the magnet of the campaign upon a platform of living principles, the central plank of which shall be to let the trusts and the economy for the Philippines, Cuba and Porto Rico."

The recipe is simple, almost absurdly simple. The BRYANS and GORMANS and VAN WYCKS have only to consult their looking glasses and then stand aside in humility. The Democracy has then only to persuade Admiral Dewey to become its magnet and to run for President on this platform:

"1. Death to the trusts.
 2. Surrender all the fruits of the war."

How easy! But Admiral GEORGE DEWEY is said to possess a temper, somewhat restrained by good manners and a keen sense of humor.

A RECENT VICTORY.

How It is Regarded in a Few Other Newspaper Offices.

Whatever runs up against THE SUN is sure to get a shaking, whether it be a Democratic contemporary or the National Typographical Union. This latter organization tried to run things in THE SUN office with a high hand, and not succeeding to its satisfaction it ordered out the strikers, typesetting machine operators and others in the establishment of the Union, and had any authority. This was done late one night, but THE SUN was not to be left in the lurch and the next morning's issue appeared as usual, and every day's edition has come out since, without a newsworthy error. Now THE SUN has some 200 new employees, and the place of the strikers, all free men with no allegiance to the Union, and is fully satisfied with its new force. THE SUN is famed for having a good paper to work for and the strikers have succeeded nicely in biting off their own noses.

From the President's News.

We believe "Big Six" is still fighting THE SUN, and we hear a good deal of their boycott. But the evidence of THE SUN's own pages is that it is all being set up in its own establishment and apparently is keeping up its end amazingly well.

From the Vandergrift Citizen.

The Typographical Union undertook to run the affairs of the New York Sun, but in their attempt they ran against a snag, with the almost invariable result that several old employees are out of good jobs for which they have always received the highest rates paid for similar work. As a class, printers are intelligent, but in this case they have permitted the pernicious walking delegate to make ridiculous demands.

From the Walla Walla Statesman.

Elsewhere we publish an editorial from THE SUN wherein it exposes the arbitrary methods of the Typographical Union. THE SUN makes its case clear and will have the sympathy and aid of its readers all over the world for its independence.

From the Woodbury Reporter.

The spirit of independence displayed by THE SUN is magnificent. A representative of the Typographical Union ordered out the men who had done faithful work for THE SUN for many years, because THE SUN refused to grant the demands of the Union. THE SUN never misleads its readers, and secured new help and went on as though never a cloud had cast a shadow over the brightness of its shining.

The Irish Born Population of New York City.

To the Editor of THE SUN.—In the column of "Questions and Answers" of THE SUN of July 10, last, the statement is made in answer to a correspondent that "the population of the City of New York is about 3,700,000; of these about 350,000 are foreign born, and about 200,000 are natives of Ireland."

The number 600,000, given as the number of the natives of Ireland in the City of New York, is much too large. A study of the last United States census report and the latest immigration reports shows that their number is scarcely half of 600,000.

The Irish born in New York City in 1890 numbered 160,736, and in Brooklyn, 60,759, making a total of 221,495. The Irish in New York City in 1880 numbered 140,000, and in Brooklyn, 50,000, making a total of 190,000. The Irish in New York City in 1870 numbered 120,000, and in Brooklyn, 40,000, making a total of 160,000.

The numerical strength of the Irish element in our country, as well as New York City, has been greatly exaggerated. Before 1820 there was very little Irish immigration to this country, and during Colonial times almost none. Since 1840 about 3,800,000 natives of Ireland have come to this country, but the majority among them have been Irish immigrants, and so many of them died without leaving descendants, that in 1890 there were only 2,164,957 natives of Irish parentage in this country. These 2,164,957, however, included 2,164,957, with a small number, for the descendants in the third generation of the Irish who came after 1840, and a smaller number for the descendants of the few Irish who came before 1840, which is much less than has been generally supposed.

It is doubtful if the Irish proportion in the American population of race amounts to more than 8 or 9 per cent.

BROOKLYN, Aug. 24.

Ex-Gov. Bob Taylor's Whereabouts and Intentions.

From the Nashville Banner.

JOHNSON CITY, Aug. 21.—Ex-Gov. Bob Taylor was interviewed today by the *Banner* representative on his return from his tour of inspection in a grove back of his home, engaged in rewriting the constitution of the State. He is expected to commence in October, and he is in hopes for nine months from New England to California.

Chicago Described by Chicago.

From the Chicago Tribune.

We've got the finest summer weather The best lake breeze, altogether, The greatest parks and boulevards, The tallest man for crossing guards, And loveliest smiling city yards, In Chicago.

The sky is that of Italy In Chicago, The girls are that of Italy In Chicago, The world is that of Italy In Chicago, We beat the world in packing meat, And we can show the dirtiest street, In Chicago.

The office buildings are the tallest, In Chicago, The death penalty is the smallest, In Chicago, No other town is so to mention, With a million of natives of Ireland, And thieves retire on a pension, In Chicago.

We've got the most evangelists In Chicago, Our specialty is philanthropy In Chicago, We send more soldiers to the war In Chicago, And crowd more persons in a car, In Chicago.

The air is full of health—and dust— In Chicago, 'Tis not controlled by any trust, In Chicago, We've got the cleanest chimneys yet, In Chicago, The biggest surplus, smallest debt, And water—water—to get, In Chicago.

It is a pleasure to see *Scribner's Magazine* in its familiar undressed yellow cover again. The contents of the number for September, too, are more like those that made the magazine welcome when it first appeared as the *Long, Heavy, Illustrated Serial* than those that have since been thrown overboard. There are short stories by Joel Chandler Harris, Miss Grace Kellie Gunning, Charles Warren and Albert White. The Stevenson letters and the serials by Mr. Quiller-Couch, and Robert Grant are continued, and there are also verse.

THE QUESTION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.

The Views of a Wise and Moderate Reformer of Unruly Youth.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: This is one of the subjects discussed periodically in years past, and with doubtful results. It seems, so long as there are "many men of many minds," there will be many opinions of many kinds, and none more pronounced than those respecting corporal punishment.

What is corporal punishment? Ordinarily we mean the punishment of a child with a rod of some kind, or strap, on the hand or some part of the body. In the days of our forefathers a birch rod or ruler was generally used. In more recent days, a rattan or a strap. At the present time it is spanking with a shoe, or with a padlock, or using the instrument of torture, or "an angry correctional weapon," "something that leaves a heavy weal on the flesh that endures in sores." It is anything that causes bodily pain, or suffering of any kind. Hence the restriction of food to bread and water; or any position of the body that soon becomes painful; walking up and down stairs many times; or being locked in a room. Any such treatment is corporal punishment.

Shall corporal punishment of any kind be resorted to in correcting a child? I answer "No." There are undoubtedly instances, rare perhaps, where a good whipping, causing pain but no real injury, will benefit a wilful, stubborn child more than any amount of talking, or any other method of treatment. Solomon had in mind such instances when he wrote that "the rod and the scourge chastise the son," and so did the author of the proverb, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." This is not a matter of opinion, but of knowledge and experience, as many parents and saved children can testify. These, however, are the exceptions, not the rule, and they are cases requiring the most careful discrimination.

Many elderly people who used Webster's Spelling Book in childhood will recall the picture in the back part of the book of the boy hastening down from the apple tree to beg the old farmer to let him down. The old man detected the boy in the tree stealing his apples, and expostulated with him in vain. He then threw tufts of grass at him, which only provoked ridicule. But when he pelted with stones the boy hastened down, and begged the old man's pardon. This is the Bible doctrine. If a child is gentle and means do not avail, then severity.

Corporal punishment was abolished in the public schools of this city some years ago. A while after, the assistant superintendents of schools while visiting one of the reformatory schools for boys, were asked to give their opinion on the remark that it was a mistake that boys, instead of being kept in school and brought to terms, were "turned out," and in due time were found in reformatories. The following day the assistant superintendents were asked the question, "How many of you were 'turned out' of the public schools?" and a surprising number of hands were raised in reply. The reason is plain. Many troublesome, hardened, vicious boys are cowardly. Nothing will restrain them but physical pain. Most of them will be restrained through the fear of punishment, not otherwise. Deprive the principal of this authority, and as a last resort the boy is compelled to leave the school.

The principal of a school, or superintendent of a reformatory, is in the position of a judge, personally disinterested and impartial. If qualified for his position, he can safely be entrusted with authority to enforce obedience; the simple fact of being endowed with such authority being a sufficient restraint with the majority of troublesome boys. To the question, "Should the superintendent be authorized to administer corporal punishment," I answer emphatically, "No." A principal or superintendent will discriminate. Corporal punishment will be a last resort, and will seldom be repeated, some other method being resorted to for the same offense. Boys who become exasperated and consequently act hastily, repeating the punishment again and again without discrimination.

Some years ago, in a Western reform school, every officer carried a rattan, and for every act of disobedience, serious or trifling, the rattan was used. One of the disciplinary officers, who believed the boys could be kept under control in no other way, said, "We cannot reform these boys. We can only keep them suppressed. Like the puppet in the box, unlock the strings, and it jumps." Quite true. The methods are based on the principle that had conducted invariably merit corporal punishment. The principle is wrong and the result bad. A boy refuses obedience point blank, and challenges any one to compel it. He is reported to the superintendent, who makes no allusion to his conduct, but quietly and pleasantly questions him about his home and his experiences. The boy becomes interested, and the fear of a summary flogging is dispelled. The principal then alludes to his conduct and points out his mistakes, and the boy is corrected. The superintendent, his teacher, and gives no trouble thereafter. Had he been punished, the result would have been altogether different. All cases could not be treated in like manner, for no two cases are alike. But take the boy's past history, put him in the place, and you can decide upon the wisest course to pursue.

The evils of indiscriminate corporal punishment more than counterbalance the evils arising from the total abolition of such punishment, and therefore of the two evils, I should choose the former.

But, in my judgment, the wiser course would be to delegate discretionary power to the chief executive of school or institution.

NEW YORK, Aug. 20.

A SOUTH AFRICAN INCIDENT.

The Boers and the British in Their Treatment of the Natives.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: Perhaps you will allow me to offset the account made by your correspondent, "J. Merrick," in THE SUN of Thursday on the Transvaal Boers for their treatment of the natives, whose country they occupy, by an allusion to an incident that occurred in Natal, the British colony bordering on the Transvaal.